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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQ ONE YEAR LATER

#### Summary

-- The first anniversary of the war in Iraq was the lead story in all Jordanian papers published over the weekend, March 19-21. The majority of editorial commentaries focus on the "failure of the occupation to fulfill promises" made to the Iraqi people. Some commentaries view the U.S. occupation of Iraq as part of a grand American scheme to reshape the entire region "for the sake of Israel".

#### Editorial Commentary

-- "The spoils of the war on Iraq"

Commenting on President Bush's address on the anniversary of the war, columnist Khaled Mahadin writes on the op-ed page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (03/21): "It was clear that the U.S. president was reading his speech amidst a feeling of moral and political defeat brought forth upon the invaders by the war. The president summed up the war in two personalities: President Saddam Hussein who was arrested and Abu Mus'ab Zargawi, whom the United States is exerting every effort to arrest.. President Bush said nothing in his speech that is worth thinking about. In fact, when mentioning what he called twenty-four member countries in the coalition of the aggression against Iraq, he mentioned these countries three times in a speech that took only fifteen minutes. He kept repeating the talk about terrorism and the need to fight, without daring to admit that his war on the Afghani people achieved none of his explicit or even implicit objectives. As for his war on the Iraqi people, it brought him moral and political defeat and is now inflicting him with military defeat due to the Iraqi national resistance.. This war of aggression, which was and continues to be based on lies and allegations, has placed the world and world peace between two terrorisms: the terrorism of the United States, Britain and the Israeli entity and the terrorism of those who are angry about the occupation of their lands, the contempt for their religion, the humiliation of their dignity, and the efforts to turn them into slaves for the western civilization and the false democracy."

-- "A year after the war"

Columnist Fahd Fanek writes on the back page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (03/21): "In the days and weeks leading to the war on Iraq, the U.S. administration believed that the guaranteed American victory will provide complete legitimacy for the aggression in the eyes of the world. The leaders in the Pentagon and the White House said that the war is going to provide America with security, to exercise pressure in favor of democracy in the Middle East, to open the road towards a peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, to terrify Iran and Syria enough to force them to yield to American conditions, and to direct a knockout blow to international terrorism, shutting up the opponents of the war. One year later, it becomes clear that all this was more a fantasy than a well-studied policy and a calculated decision. Contrary to that, the war opponents' warnings about its cost and its destructive influence on the America's reputation and credibility were proven, not to mention the fact that it opened the door wide to terrorism and isolated America from the international community.. Iraq before the war stood fast despite the unjust 13-year siege. Iraq today is ruin, destruction, unemployment, poverty and sectarianism.. America won militarily within a few weeks, but it is politically and morally defeated, and for many years to come."



-- "Why the occupation of Iraq?"

Chief Editor Taher Udwan writes on the back page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (03/21): "If Iraq had had weapons of mass destruction, then Bush and Blair would not have dared launch the war. The war took place because Washington and London were sure that there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and that Saddam Hussein would not be capable to resist. The story of the weapons of mass destruction is nothing but a trick and a title for the biggest misleading campaign in history. The relationship between Iraq's occupation and Israel's security is not merely a thin line subject to debate. There is a 'highway' linking the two objectives. The ruling extremist right wing in Washington succeeded in recruiting the superpower to fight on behalf of Israel and on behalf of Zionism.. A balance of terror or balance of weapons is not permitted between the Arabs and Israel, which has more than 100 nuclear heads. Such a balance would impose a peace or a settlement in the region that would take into consideration the interests of both parties and would be based on international legitimacy. Such peace is not allowed, neither for the Israeli or the American sides. The required peace in the Middle East is a peace of succumbing and surrendering that would allow Israel to be the domineering power and would make the Palestinians and the Arabs subject to the language of force and a de facto situation. There are many reasons for the occupation of Iraq, but the last is the spread of democracy in Iraq and in the Arab countries. Democracy, as it appears in the bill of Syrian accountability and the Greater Middle East Initiative, is nothing but a cover for the continuous American-Zionist campaign to deprive Arabs of any weapons whereby they can achieve the balance of terror with Israel's weapons of mass destruction. The lesson learned from the occupation of Iraq is that the peace process between the Arabs and Israel on the basis of international resolutions is no longer a priority."

-- "Both the occupation and the terrorism must end in Iraq"

Daily columnist Bader Wardam writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (03/21): "A year after the American aggression on Iraq, we can understand the reality of the war as being similar to the war of elimination between gang leaders. This war was the outcome of a process of elimination launched by the big gang leader in Washington against a small gang leader in Baghdad, who happens to have many riches that the former wanted. This very clearly is the war. Lies about weapons of mass destruction and liberating the Iraqi people cannot convince anyone anymore. The weapons do not exist and the promise of freedom is not fulfilled.. The United States turned Iraq from a state that might have been oppressive and totalitarian to a vast land of chaos and destruction, where people die without cause and where murderous groups, be they the American army or terrorist or religious extremist organization, are rampant.. A year later, the war proved a big failure, not because of the bombings or the resistance operations, but because it failed to fulfill its promises to the Iraqi people. All the illusions and the slogans that have accompanied the American aggression are disappearing, the governing council is proving its failure in running the affairs of the Iraqi people, and the American occupation is spreading chaos and destruction and is gradually disintegrating the Iraqi state.. Why don't we move from the position of cursing, condemning and rebuking to a state of assisting the Iraqi people so they can achieve their freedom and rid themselves of the occupation and the terrorism?. If we want to help the Iraqi people, then the way is not ululating the resistance and former regime, but rather by supporting every effort towards ending the occupation and achieving stability."

-- "The events of one year of occupation"

Chief Editor Taher Udwan writes on the back page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (03/20): "'Democracy' and 'rebuilding Iraq' have become the mottos of the occupation forces after the fall of Baghdad. Yet, a year later, these mottos seem to have entered the same realm of lies as that of the story of 'Iraq's weapons of mass destruction' and the tale of Saddam Hussein's capability to destroy the world within 45 minutes. This is not all. The new Iraq is not Bremer's constitution that cast aside the Arabic identity of Iraq, nor the celebrations of Talbani and Barzani of the veto they got to divide up



Iraq, but rather the heroic resistance to the occupation, a resistance that grows solid with every passing day.. As for the identity of this resistance, its quality and momentum stress that it is Iraqi and that it enjoys popular protection, and this is enough. The talk about Zargawi and Al-Qa'eda is nothing but fabrications from the American war on terrorism that are designed to cover up the American-British failure of achieving security, democracy, reconstruction and such other false promises."

-- "One year on the occupation of Iraq: the failed march of the administration's war on terrorism"

Daily columnist Jamil Nimri writes on the back page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (03/20): "True, Washington got rid of two regimes [Saddam Hussein's and the Taliban] that we are not sorry to see go, but that was the easy part, that required muscle and not brains. Apart from that, everything the administration did was wrong. It is no coincidence that at the end of every discussion, the American official has nothing left to say but that 'if we had not done that, Saddam's regime would still be standing'. This is important for the people of the two countries and maybe for the opponents, but as far as the international community and the cause of the war on terrorism, which is the headline for everything that America did, is concerned, this administration recorded an enormous failure and politicians who had orchestrated this failure must feel great shame."

-- "Marking the anniversary of the aggression on Iraq"

Daily columnist Mohammad Amayreh write on the op-ed page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (03/20): "On the eve of the first anniversary of the American-British aggression on brotherly Iraq, which concluded in the occupation of Iraqi territory, the fall of the political regime and the capture of the Iraqi president and tens of his political and military leaders, Iraq remains suffering from 'fear and loneliness' and terrorism continues to strike here and there, and all the while, the occupiers continue their claims and their allegations of freedom, democracy and human rights for the Iraqi people. Despite the attempt of the occupation and its media apparatus - new and old - to beautify the Iraqi image, failure is the title of this attempt. The real image of occupied Iraq is that of misery, with everything this word means: chaos, ruin, destruction, killing, arrests, blood-shedding and continuous foreign efforts to provoke an ethnic or civil war. These efforts are relentless and the Mossad's playing fingers are noticeably clear, although the occupiers are trying to pin everything on Al-Qa'eda organization or Ansar Al-Islam or other organizations.. Much could be said on this painful anniversary, but the major events that are taking place in Iraq every day confirm two basic facts: the first is that what happened is an occupation . and the second is that resisting this occupation is a legitimate right to all Iraqis.. A point to keep in mind here is that the real resistance would not lie to its people and would not kill its own sons and daughters. Therefore, people should look for western foreign hands behind the terrorist operations, for those who stand to benefit from them are enemies of the nation and enemies of Iraq."

-- "From August 2 to March 20"

Daily columnist Rakan Majali writes on the back page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (03/20): "It is no secret that Iraq fell in the trap on August 2, 1990 and that the crazy adventure of occupying Kuwait was designed to pave the way for occupying Iraq. It is regretful that the events of August 2nd have led to the events of March 20th without there being reasons and justifications for invading Iraq, which recognized the state of Kuwait. But the real reasons for occupying Iraq are not a secret, where Israel and American have been planning

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for the longest time to grab Iraq, being the backbone of the Arab nation in the east. The occupation of Iraq clearly paves the way for implementing the American project of reshaping the region, the basis of which is the disarmament of all the countries of the region of any power and maintaining Israel as the sole regional power."

-- "One year after the war"

Semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (03/19) editorial concludes: "A year has gone by after the



war and the consequences on the ground answer the many questions that are related to the crises of international relations. The former Iraqi regime fell, but no one won. In fact, everyone lost. Is there anyone to learn the lesson?"

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